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**BAY AREA NUCLEAR WASTE COALITION**

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September 4, 2001

The Honorable Spencer Abraham  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Abraham:

The Bay Area Nuclear Waste Coalition is a non-profit public education and advocacy organization concerned with issues of nuclear waste. We spent 10 years fighting against the irresponsible proposal to bury nuclear wastes in shallow, unlined trenches at Ward Valley, California and recently served on a task force appointed by California Governor Gray Davis to develop radioactive waste containment policy for the state. We have provided comments on aspects of the Yucca Mountain proposal in the past and wish to express our objection to the lack of proper, reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing on the DOE's site recommendation of Yucca Mountain for a national high-level nuclear waste repository.

On August 21, 2001, with less than 30 days for any interested person to read the DOE's more than 370 page long technical report, "Yucca Mountain Preliminary Site Suitability Evaluation," your agency announced it was holding public hearings on the site recommendation of Yucca Mountain in Nevada between September 5th and 13th. Not only are these hearings provided with totally inadequate notice, but, for persons who will be affected by the requisite transportation of high-level nuclear waste through their hometowns via rail and road, your agency has provided no opportunity to comment on the suitability of the recommendation. A few meetings in Nevada does not come close to providing an opportunity for public hearing on a project of this magnitude and immense potential danger to those on transportation routes throughout the county.

It is apparent from the notices your agency published in the Federal Register on August 21, 27 and 31, that the public is not clearly placed on notice that these are public hearings on your agency's decision to recommend Yucca Mountain as the site for a national high-level nuclear waste repository. Persons reading the notice are given the impression that these are merely hearings on the preliminary site suitability evaluation. Even then, your provision of less than thirty days notice from the availability of the 370 page evaluation and the few hearings in Nevada make it impossible for ordinary citizens to have any meaningful participation in such meetings. The notice was too short even to arrange one's schedule to attend, too far away from most persons who are interested due to being on the high-level nuclear waste transportation routes, too little time to acquire and assimilate the substance of the 370-plus page evaluation of the site, and completely defective due to the errors mentioned above.

There is no doubt that, no matter what provisions may be in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the National Environmental Policy Act protections require that persons such as ourselves—and affected Nevadans—must have at least reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard on a decision such as this one, a decision with vast repercussions and grave potential dangers. Your agency's actions in this regard have not come even close to meeting the most minimal constitutional protections of citizens' rights to due process in this instance.

We join with other organizations across the country and call on you to reschedule these hearings with adequate notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard by all persons who will be affected by your agency's recommendation of Yucca Mountain as the national high-level waste repository.

Sincerely,



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